

MINUTES
ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL AREAS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room No. 2
May 26, 2015 at 5:15 p.m.

Present: Councillor Dean Murdock (Chair), Mary Haig-Brown, Harry Drage, Hal Gibbard, George Klima, Kevin Brown, Jude Coates

Staff: Adriane Pollard, Environmental Services Manager; Cory Manton, Urban Forestry, Horticulture and Natural Areas Manager; Gary Darrah, Parks Planning and Design Manager; Becky Goodall, Park Planner Designer; Elizabeth van den Hengel, Committee Clerk

Regrets: Al-Nashir Charania, Roberta Hesselgrave,

Guest: Larry Leyne

Minutes

MOVED by H. Drage and Seconded by M. Haig-Brown: "That the Minutes of the Environment and Natural Areas Advisory Committee meeting held April 28, 2015, be adopted as amended."

CARRIED

FARMLANDS TRUST

The Chair introduced Ms. Jessica Dennis, PhD Student, University of Victoria. Ms. Dennis gave a presentation on the Farmlands Trust. The following was noted:

- There is strong public support for the ALR.
- Farmlands/foodlands have an important role in the good of the public.
- There is a need and support for a trust approach to preserving farmland.
- The most significant barriers to new/young farmers are prohibitive land costs and non-farm use of ALR land.
- Farmland Trust activities overview:
 - Land acquisition and long term lease to farmer
 - Covenants
 - Land use planning and stewardship
 - Training, succession planning and public engagement
- There are numerous models and precedents for Farmland trusts.
- Diverse funding strategies are required.
- Integral to the success of a Farmland Trust are program governance and proper oversight.
- A regional approach with municipal leadership and support is the favoured plan.
- Recent examples of Municipal Government Farmland acquisition:
 - Purchased by the Municipality: Haliburton farm, Panama Flats, Terra Nova Rural Park and Garden City Lands.
 - Private donation to a Municipality: Newman Farm
 - Amenity Contribution: Sandown Racetrack, Southlands Farm
 - Identification of underutilized existing public land: Loutet Farm and the Richmond Incubator Farm
- A Farmland specific fund with acquisition of farmland being optimal goal would be

the desired approach.

- ***The Farmland Trust should be made part of an integrated governance strategy.***

Committee discussion occurred and the following was noted:

- Amendments will be required for Saanich to directly acquire farmland.
- A regional Farmlands trust is the preferred approach for funding.
- Boulevard gardening is currently not being considered in Saanich.
- Possible funding source from raising rural property tax on residences that are not actively farmed to create an incentive for farm use.
- All municipalities will need to support the Farmlands Trust project to create regional support.
- Saanich has a high proportion of under-utilized farmland.
- Density bonusing on residential property with contribution to the ALR could be considered.
- Currently there is no clearly defined target of how much farmland the region will require to be self-sufficient.
- The preferred path through the process of developing a Farmlands Trust needs to be determined. Staff should review the most feasible direction that Saanich could pursue.
- With so many options to consider with respect to the development of a Farmlands Trust, consideration should be given to narrowing down the list of options to allow for a more clearly defined process.
- The Planning Department could be asked to present an overview to the ENA Advisory Committee of what Planning would forward to Council for consideration when forming a Farmlands Trust.

The Committee thanked Ms. Dennis for her presentation.

CUTHBERT HOLMES PARK DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Parks Planning and Design Manager and the Park Planner Designer presented detailed information about the updates planned for the final draft of the Cuthbert Holmes Management Plan. Highlights were noted as follows:

- Acquisition of those parcels within the Park that are not owned by Saanich.
- Rezone all parcels to P4-N and include/ re-name Tillicum Park.
- Consider land acquisition opportunities along the south side of the Colquitz River.
- Indicate mitigation measures for the Trans-Canada Highway and Admirals Road intersection.
- Elevate the profile of the Migratory Birds Sanctuary, fish fence and salmon run.
- Acknowledge the importance and sensitivity of the mud flats/estuary.
- Recognize and establish an opinion on boating and consider BMPs/techniques to minimize impact on wildlife.
- Specify closure and restoration of unnecessary roads, asphalt and the restoration of recently acquired parcels in action items.
- Provide more background on dogs, bikes and boat issues.
- Provide more information on why invasive plants need to be removed.
- Explore a trail connection from Admirals Road/ Admirals Bridge.
- Keep some of the “goat” trails for exploring/sense of adventure experience. Allow bikes to continue to use these trails.
- Reconsider the bench placements by the river.
- Address the run-off from the mall and the Trans-Canada Highway/Admirals intersection.
- Improve pedestrian access to the Trans-Canada Highway and Admirals Road.

- Allow for the creation of a Park Steward program.

Committee members provided comments and asked questions of staff

- The approach to managing dogs within the Park is good. Voluntary compliance signage will be posted at strategic areas within the Park.
- Voluntary compliance will be monitored. If there is low compliance then Saanich will move to the next level of enforcement to manage dogs with Cuthbert Holmes Park.
- A fenced area for loose dogs could be considered.
- The proposed Management Plan for Cuthbert Holmes Park has benefited from the lengthy public consultation and community engagement processes.

Motion: MOVED by K. Brown and Seconded by J. Coates, “That the Environment and Natural Areas Advisory Committee endorse the draft Cuthbert Holmes Park Management Plan and support staff taking the Plan forward to Council for endorsement.”

CARRIED

SIGNIFICANT TREE GRANT APPLICATION- SIGNIFICANT TREE #20- 1721 JEFFERSON AVENUE (Garry Oak)

The following quotes were considered for pruning further to Permit No. TRP11142:

- Bartlett Tree Experts (\$609.00)
- Advantage Tree Care (\$630.00)
- Dogwood Tree Services (\$1400.00)

Motion: MOVED by J. Coates and Seconded by K. Brown: “That a grant of 50% of the estimate of \$609.00 provided by Bartlett Tree Experts be paid to the applicant.”

CARRIED

REVIEW OF THE SIGNIFICANT TREE PROGRAM AND URBAN FOREST

The Urban Forestry, Horticulture and Natural Areas Manager provided a brief review of the Significant Tree program and urban forests. Committee discussion occurred and the highlights were noted as follows:

- A tour of Saanich Significant Trees could be arranged for September 2015.
- The Committee would like to be updated on urban forest canopy changes.
- Google Earth photographs could be considered as a tool for monitoring changes in the urban canopy cover.

REVIEW OF THE DRAFT OF THE NOXIOUS WEEDS BYLAW PACKAGE

The Manager of Environmental Services presented information regarding the proposed Invasive Species Bylaw which is to replace the Noxious Weeds Bylaw of 1906. Committee members provided comments and asked questions of Manager of Environmental Services. Highlights were noted as follows

- Requiring nurseries to submit a list of five invasive plants to stop selling in the first year and then five additional plants to stop selling on subsequent years could result in a lengthy timeframe for the halting of the sale of Category A plants.
- Control measures to deal with ants should be more defined.
- Ants are a fairly recent problem and Best Management Practices for ant control do

not exist.

- The current methodology to deal with ants is a trial and error approach with individual landowners. Best management practice with respect to ants is still evolving.
- Outreach to soil providers to educate on reducing the risk of spreading ants should be considered.

Motion: MOVED by G. Klima and Seconded by J. Coates, “That the Environment and Natural Areas Advisory Committee:

- a) Support the adoption of the Revised Noxious Weeds Bylaw and endorsement of the enforcement policy; and**
- b) Endorse the allocation of sufficient funds to effectively rollout the Revised Noxious Weeds Bylaw in terms of public education about the aim of the Revised Noxious Weeds Bylaw and the actions that are required to eradicate or control noxious weeds.”**

CARRIED

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

Next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 22, 2015

Councillor Murdock, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

Committee Secretary